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16 August 1971

MEMORANDUM FOR:

[REDACTED]  
Special Assistant to the Director  
of Personnel

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FROM :

[REDACTED] Summer Intern  
DD/I, Special Research Staff

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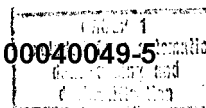
SUBJECT : Comments on Summer Intern Experience

Although I personally find it rather difficult to assess an experience which is still in progress, the requirements for this memorandum are vague enough that perhaps I can do it some justice.

1. I entered into my contract period with the Central Intelligence with a substantial number of misgivings and apprehensions, which came from a number of sources. First and foremost was the panoply of doubts as to the advisability of working for such an 'Establishment' organization -- doubts which come particularly from the student section of the academic community. Such doubts arise primarily from lack of knowledge within the academic community about the functions of the CIA and the well-publicized accounts of some of a certain section's more spectacular failures, and are compounded for all by the 'no-comment' policy. In light of my experience here this summer, I think that, in the course of what will surely be something akin to interrogations with my associates, I may perhaps be able to dispel some small pockets of ignorance at Columbia University. I feel no reason to hide my association with this Agency, as I had originally feared I might. Some of these

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original apprehensions still exist, most notably concerning future travel restrictions, but I do not regret my decision on this account.

2. Further misgivings were aroused during the 'interview' experience and during the prolonged waiting period which preceded confirmation of employment. I found the latter particularly annoying due to the fact that I had gone through a complete background investigation for the Army Security Agency as recently as 1969, a fact which I thought might have speeded the investigation process. If there is any way by which this waiting time could be cut shorter, perhaps by making application due dates earlier, it would be better for all concerned.

3. I was perhaps laboring under a misconception when I arrived in April for my interview, having heard from a number of friends about the interview process of certain corporate concerns. I certainly didn't expect anything like that kind of treatment, and I knew I would be taking a series of tests, but I didn't expect the impersonal ordeal I went through. It might be at least somewhat reassuring to have a short meeting with someone who knows one's name before having to face the induction center-like battery of tests and machines which take up the greater part of the 'interview' process. Some of the tests themselves are overly long and of little value; I'm thinking primarily of the subjective personality test, which I found nearly impossible to take seriously for academic reasons. Once one got to the actual interview with prospective employers, things went well, even though it was necessarily vague. But I must say that, if the Agency were in a competitive situation, an 'interview' of such a military/clinical nature could only lose prospective employees.

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4. After such a shaky start, I was surprised to find most of my doubts quickly and easily dispelled once I 'came aboard.' This was done mostly by the really outstanding people with whom I have had daily contact in the DDI/SRS office. There I was given an interesting and challenging project in harmony with my interests, access to a wealth of valuable information, and a green light to use it as I saw fit. Not only was I given encouragement and assistance during the course of my research, but I have also been made to feel that I am actually making a contribution, that my work is appreciated. I have also been impressed by the unselfish help which I have received from other sections of the Agency, notably CRS and OCI. Being probably near the bottom of the priority list, I have been surprised and gratified by the prompt and thorough assistance I have received from so many people.

5. My feelings are slightly more ambivalent about the intern program itself, consisting of the series of sometimes rather dry briefings and plumbing charts. It is unfortunate that interns don't have more opportunities to get together in more casual circumstances, though I realize this is nearly impossible to arrange due to varied assignments, locations, etc. Perhaps if a brief list of names, addresses and phone numbers were made available, the interns could take their own initiative to get together to exchange views and compare experiences. This might benefit the program in that more concrete commentaries might evolve.

6. I have been favorably impressed with the honest and open nature of many of our briefings, particularly at NPIC, though there remains a gap in my knowledge of DDP and DDS&T. My major complaint is that so many of the meetings were concentrated in the period of time corresponding to my most intensive research and collation.

7. In sum, I consider the summer I have spent here to be one of exceptional value as a broadening educational experience. I have gained firsthand knowledge of the nature

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and operation of an organization that has heretofore been shrouded in dark and foreboding mystery, an organization about which I had only heard the worst reports. Instead, I have found the CIA to be a highly organized, sophisticated, and objective bureaucracy whose regard for accuracy and professional dependability is very impressive. I have found the majority of the people with whom I have had contact to be amazingly dedicated and intelligent scholars, and very pleasurable to work with. I have received also a broad picture of the workings and composition of the intelligence community, its strengths and weaknesses, and the career opportunities it offers. Since this is no doubt the primary goal of the intern program, I would have to say it has been quite successful.

8. On a more specialized and personal level, my summer experience has greatly expanded my familiarity with my own field of specialization, namely Chinese politics. Through working with some of the excellent finished research that has been produced by the SRS and OCI staffs, much of which would be welcomed in the academic community, and through my own use of the valuable resources made available to me, I have been able to absorb more hard information and objective analysis than I could have attained in several semesters of classwork and part-time research. I feel I have also gained worthwhile experience in working with sources and doing intensive research work such as will be required when I do a thesis.

9. For these reasons, then, I would like to express my gratitude and appreciation to all those who have been responsible for making the intern program such a rewarding experience, and particularly to the people in the Special Research Staff, whose help and encouragement has made this such a worthwhile summer.

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Respectfully submitted,



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